

Provo River Diversion May Cause Fish Kill

11-29-95
by Bob Gressmen

A section of the Provo River is drying up this week after someone apparently diverted too much water into irrigation canals, disrupting the river's minimum stream flows.

Because of the diversion at the Vallejo turnout, the streambed is almost completely dry. A few shallow pools contain what are now landlocked brown and rainbow trout. In addition, important aquatic insects which are a trout food source are also dying.

The Vallejo turnout is designed to divert water into a canal to be used for irrigation and stock watering, but according to the Provo River Manager, 20 cubic feet of water per second (CFS) is to remain in the main river channel as in-stream flows.

The Bureau of Reclamation allows the minimum amount of water to flow from Jordanelle Dam during the winter months, 50 CFS. Some of the water is pulled at diversion dams for different reasons, but in all cases 20 CFS are to remain.

The Vallejo turnout, one of five diversion dams between Jordanelle and Deer Creek Reservoir, is approximately two miles below the Jordanelle Dam. The gate turns water to the east into a canal, and

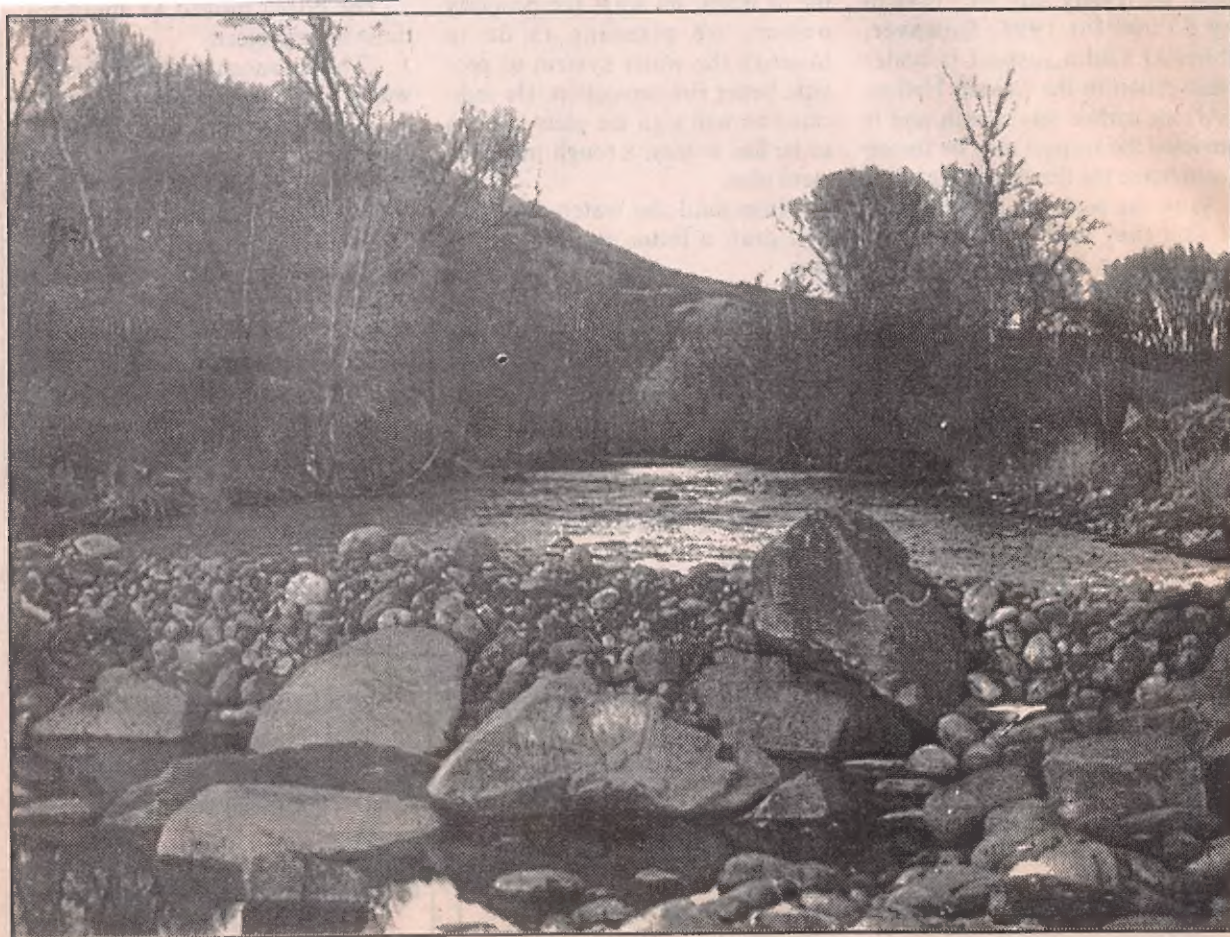
this week the entire flow of river has been diverted.

Someone has rebuilt the diversion spillway with a backhoe by piling six feet of rocks, a man made dam that would divert April run-offs. Officials who monitor the river say they first learned of the possibly illegal diversion when contacted by The Wave.

"I didn't know about that," said Stan Roberts, Provo River Water Commissioner. "There is supposed to be a 20 CFS minimum in the stream bed."

Commissioner Roberts was the end of a long line of investigative telephone calls to find out who gave the go ahead for the complete diversion of the Provo river. Three different officials commented they knew it wasn't supposed to be done, but it has been for years.

The Bureau of Reclamation is negotiating with wildlife officials to increase the dam releases to 125 CFS to be allowed to run all the way to Deer Creek. The higher flows are slated to improve fishing, recreation, irrigation and stock water diversion. Until then, officials say the fish population will be drastically affected by the apparently unauthorized river destruction.



Officials say this diversion dam is taking more water than allowed and may result in a fish kill.

Drifting through the seasons

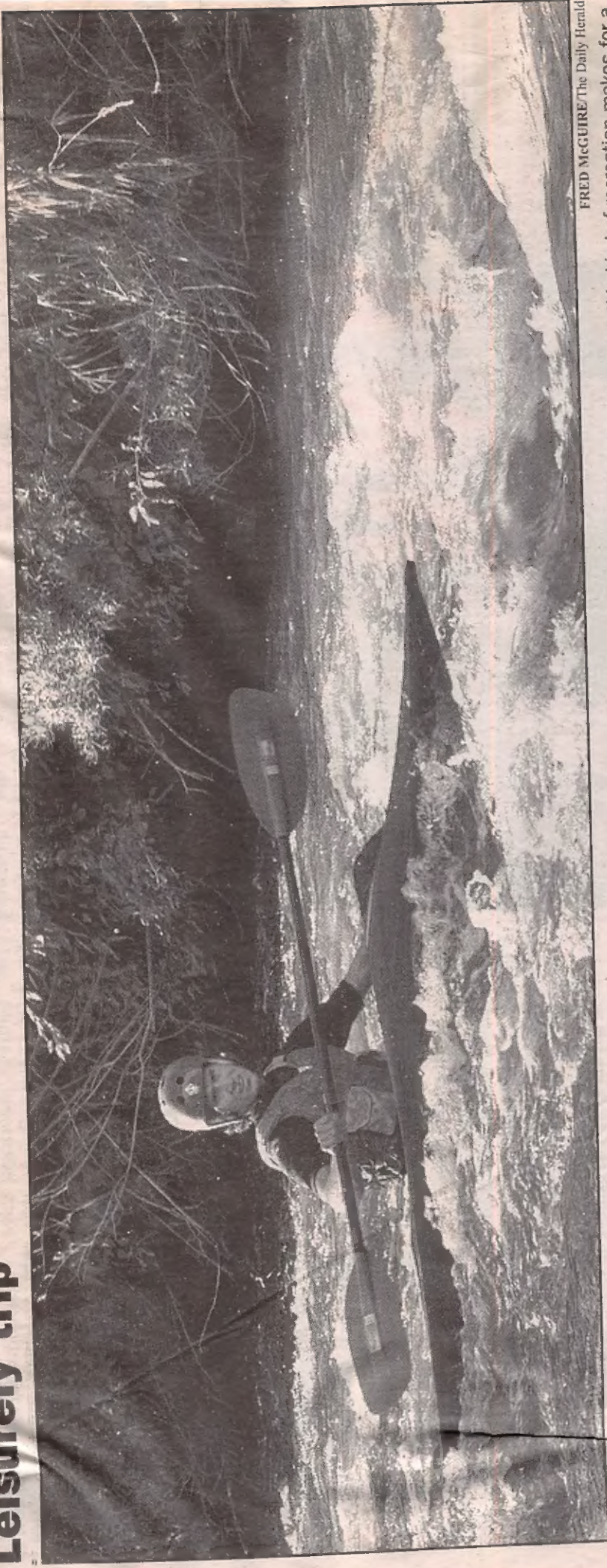


BRIAN WINTER/The Daily Herald

Rafters make their way down the Provo River in Provo Canyon on Monday, enjoying the seasonal colors that are appearing in the area. Autumn officially arrived late Monday afternoon, though recent cool weather had many wondering if the seasons were changing early. A report on El Niño's impact on local weather is on page D1.

9-23-97

Leisurely trip



Mike Shultof Sandy enjoys a kayak trip down the Provo River Monday in Provo Canyon. With the excellent weather and beautiful fall colors, this kind of recreation makes for a great day on the water.

1 Oct 1997

FRED MCGUIRE/The Daily Herald

Provo River Project To Receive Funding

Following unanimous Senate passage, a funding bill including \$60 million secured by Senator Bob Bennett (R-Utah) for key Utah energy and water projects, including the Central Utah Project (CUP), Little Dell Dam and salinity control in the Colorado Basin, is on its way to the White House for presidential signature.

"The health of our state depends on the continued funding of these critical water projects," said Bennett, a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee and the Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development. "I'm grateful that my colleagues, in both the Senate and the House, recognize the importance of this issue and approved my requests to help meet Utah's water needs."

The Department of Energy Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 1998 included Bennett's request for over \$41 million for CUP continued construction and completion of the

CUP. The Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program will receive \$7.6 million. An additional \$1 million goes to the Army Corps of Engineers for expeditionary completion of construction on recreation facilities at the Little Dell Dam in Parley's Canyon. The Provo River Project, a portion of CUP, will receive \$452,000.

10-15-97



Tahna Lee, of Heber City, rolled her Honda Accord Monday evening on U.S. Highway 189 after over correcting the vehicle after it went into the shoulder of the road. Lee was wearing a seatbelt and received only minor injuries. Last week in a separate accident, a Heber family was rescued by Byrant Smethurst after their vehicle veered off into the Provo River. Smethurst helped rescue Sheila Chatwin, Jamie Webb and Kyleah Webb, all of Heber City.

3-18-98

Guardsmen rescues 2 from icy Provo River

He pulls woman and toddler from upside-down car

By Jeff Call

Deseret News staff writer

3-18-98

PROVO — During his commute from Heber City to Spanish Fork Thursday morning, 1st Class Sgt. Bryan Smethurst became an unwitting poster boy for the Army National Guard.

Smethurst, a recruiter for the Guard, extols the virtues of military service almost every day. But his actions reverberated much louder than his words when he saved the lives of a woman and a 3-year-old girl after the car in which they were traveling slid on U.S. 189 and rolled over into the chilly Provo River.

At about 7 a.m. while driving down Provo Canyon, Smethurst noticed a Ford Tempo partially submerged and upside-down in the river near the Sundance exit.

"There were no people around, but I decided to stop and check it out," he said.

"Then I saw some debris, a bag

of clothes and some Tupperware, floating down the river. All the sudden I saw a woman who started yelling, saying her mom and her baby were trapped in the car. I just tried to breathe."

The woman, 22-year-old Jamie Webb, was the driver of the car. Her 3-year-old daughter, Kyleah, and her mother, Sheila Chatwin, 44, were trapped in the wreckage. All are residents of Heber.

Webb said she hit a patch of ice and lost control of her car, which slid down an embankment and rolled into the water.

Smethurst, 36, rushed into the waist-deep ice-cold water and was able to jar open the car door and free Chatwin. By this time, Smethurst said, other motorists stopped to offer assistance. He pressed on, searching for the small child and found the little girl strapped in a car seat.

"I could hear her crying," he said.

The toddler was upside down, and the water level was at the child's eyebrows.

Though he lost feeling in his hands because of the water's frigid temperatures, he managed to remove the child from the car

Please see **RESCUE** on B2

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and carried her mother were taken to regional Medical Center where treated and bruised after afternoon.

Meanwhile to work at memory a little cold didn't talk.

"He's a said Utah affairs spoke Southworth someone."

Smethurst the training National Guard years he's balance d.

On Thursday was reunited men and young circumstantially received am media. It pitch yet t who may b ing in the

But Smethurst doing what similar situation were his father's accident.